Area under Foodgrain Cultivation

4880.SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the area under foodgrain cultivation has more or less remained constant at 125 million hectares since 1970-71; and

(b) if so, what steps are being taken by Government to increase the yield per hectare?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SBPBK SATYANARAYANA RAO): (a) The area under foodgrains cultivation has fluctuated between 119.28 million hectares and 131.16 million hectares during the period from 1970-71 to 1998-99. In 1998-99, however, the area under foodgrains was 125.36 million hectares.

(b) To increase productivity and also production of foodgrains in the country, the Government is implementing centrally sponsored Integrated Cereal Development Programmes in rice/wheat/coarse cereals Based Cropping System Area, National Pulses Development Project etc. Under these programmes/project, incentives are provided to farmers for use of high yielding varieties of seeds, application of integrated pest management, propagation of scientific water management including micro irrigation and use of improved farm implements. Research is also being continuously undertaken to develop improved technologies so as to enhance the productivity and production of foodgrains. Field demonstrations on farmers holding including training of farmers and farm labourers is also being organised for effective transfer of technology.

Damage to Horticultural Produce

4881.SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pteased to state;

(a) whether it is a fact that horticultural produce are highly perishable and suffer heavy damage and deterioration in quality during post harvest handling;

(b) whether it is also a fact that losses during post harvest handling have been estimated at 37 per cent of the crop produced; and

(c) if so, what action Government have taken to prevent these losses?